

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. In a collaboration environment, a mechanism for managing information,
2 comprising:
3 an application programming interface (“API”) configured to manage and define a
4 hierarchy among a plurality of components;
5 an API configured to define an association between a first component and a
6 second component of the plurality of components;
7 an API configured to manage user access to components through a set of
8 definable permissions;
9 a containment policy configured to determine a permissible content for each
10 component of the plurality of components; and
11 an addressing scheme configured to identify and access each component of the
12 plurality of components.

1 2. The mechanism of claim 1, further comprising a workflow state interface
2 configured to define a legal workflow state of a component of the plurality of components.

1 3. The mechanism of claim 2, wherein the workflow state interface is further
2 configured to define an assignment of a workflow having the component of the plurality of
3 components.

1 4. The mechanism of claim 1, wherein each component of the plurality of
2 components is configured in a hierarchical relationship.

1 5. The mechanism of claim 4, wherein at least one component of the plurality of
2 components comprises a leaf level component.

1 6. The mechanism of claim 4, wherein at least one component of the plurality of
2 components is a parent component and a child component.

1 7. The mechanism of claim 4, wherein a component of the plurality of components
2 comprises a root component.

1 8. A method for managing information within a collaborative environment,
2 comprising:
3 defining a hierarchy for a plurality of components;
4 defining an association between at least two components of the plurality of
5 components;
6 determining a permissible content for each component of the plurality of
7 components; and
8 identifying an addressable location for each component of the plurality of
9 components.

1 9. The method of claim 8, further comprising defining a legal workflow state of a
2 component of the plurality of components.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising defining an assignment of a workflow
2 having the component of the plurality of components.

1 11. The method of claim 8, wherein at least one component of the plurality of
2 components comprises a leaf level component within the hierarchy.

1 12. The method of claim 8, wherein at least one component of the plurality of
2 components is a parent component and a child component within the hierarchy.

1 13. The mechanism of claim 1, wherein a component of the plurality of components
2 comprises a root component within the hierarchy.

1 14. In a collaboration environment, a mechanism for accessing information in an
2 application model, comprising:

3 a parser for interpreting formulas;

4 a variant type-system for manipulating simple and structured data types;

5 a set of operators and general-purpose functions;

6 a set of lookup functions that expose the underlying components and their values;

7 and

8 a calculation engine for evaluating the parsed formulas.

1 15. The mechanism of claim 14, wherein each lookup function that returns multiple
2 values provides an expression-based argument for filtering the values returned.

1 16. The mechanism of claim 14, wherein each lookup function provides arguments
2 for specifying the fields that are returned.

1 17. The mechanism of claim 16, wherein a wild-card may be specified to return all
2 fields supported by a component.

1 18. The mechanism of claim 16, wherein a field specification argument may be
2 expressed in terms of a formula that is evaluated in the context of the component that is returned.

1 19. The mechanism of claim 14, wherein a lookup function provides a path
2 specification for addressing a component location within a hierarchy.

1 20. The mechanism of claim 19, wherein a path specification may contain a wild card
2 to allow recursive lookup within descendant components in the hierarchy.

1 21. The mechanism of claim 14, wherein a set of functions are provided to return
2 metadata about the fields available for a component.

1 22. The mechanism of claim 14, wherein a user interface is provided to test and
2 develop formulas interactively.

1 23. A system for managing information within a collaborative environment,
2 comprising:
3 a means for defining a hierarchy for a plurality of components;
4 a means for defining an association between at least two components of the
5 plurality of components;
6 a means for determining a permissible content for each component of the plurality
7 of components; and
8 a means for identifying an addressable location for each component of the
9 plurality of components.

1 24. The system of claim 23, further comprising a means for defining a legal workflow
2 state of a component of the plurality of components.

1 25. The system of claim 24, further comprising a means for defining an assignment of
2 a workflow having the component of the plurality of components.

1 26. The method of claim 23, wherein at least one component of the plurality of
2 components comprises a leaf level component within the hierarchy.

1 27. The method of claim 23, wherein at least one component of the plurality of
2 components is a parent component and a child component within the hierarchy.